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IMPROVING THE HOME GROUNDS

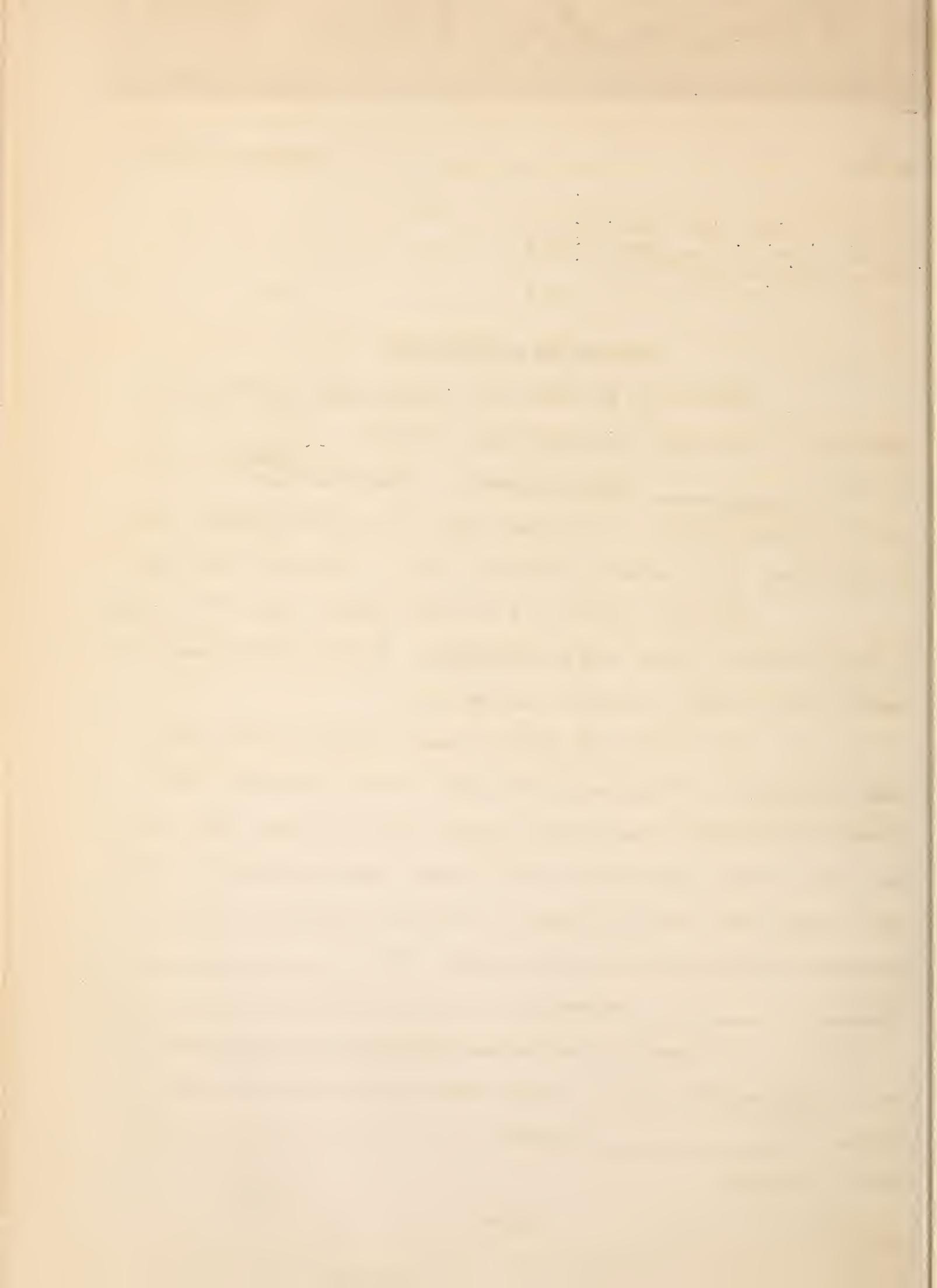
Midwinter is the time to be thinking about improving the appearance of the grounds around the house, reminds _____ (name) of the _____ Extension Service. Attractive plantings can often be managed with little or no cash outlay by using wild shrubs, vines, or young trees, or by exchanging cuttings, bulbs, or seeds with neighbors.

The first thing to do is to make a plan. Think of the plants in masses together, rather than as individuals. Plants that are known to be adapted locally usually prove most satisfactory.

For those who are making a start, perhaps the best place to begin is around the foundations of the house. Choose plants that have spreading and drooping branches that almost touch the ground. These give the effect of tying the building to the ground. Many people make the mistake of using small pines or cedars for foundation plantings. In a few years they look more like trees than shrubs. For _____, _____ recommends _____.

If foundation planting has already been done there may be one or more unsightly spots in the yard where plants can be used as a screen. _____ suggests _____ for this purpose.

(more)



If these plantings are cared for for the first 3 years they will almost take care of themselves afterward. Keep weeds out and dead wood trimmed off, but do not cultivate too much around the base of the plants. It is particularly desirable to let the leaves that drop off in the fall lie on the ground underneath the plants. The leaves will rot and make a valuable mulch on the ground. Stable manure makes an excellent mulch.

If the area near the home is rather bare the first step in beautifying it may very well be planting a few trees. Perhaps there are dogwood, redbud, or nut-bearing trees in the nearby woods; or swamp willows or small pines or cedars. February is a good time for moving these trees in the South. Small trees are easier to move, and much more likely to live.

Sometimes families that are renting think it is not worth while to do much to improve their surroundings. In one State a home demonstration agent found that some of the tenants had stayed on the same places from 3 to 15 years. She stimulated interest in improving these surroundings, and induced 80 families to plant evergreens and flowering shrubs and shade trees.

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